



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Northgate Clinic

For the purpose of this evaluation I met with Natasha, Chloe, Daryl, Lacey, Sadie and Lucy.

Barnet, Enfield and Haringey NHS Mental Health Trust Tier 4 service offers support to children and young people with serious emotional wellbeing difficulties. The structure of the service is set up to provide two in-patient units and a school, which is attached to both units. The service is located at Edgware Community Hospital in Barnet.

Northgate offers support to young people from boroughs mainly across north London but including some from south London and the home counties. Young people aged 13-18 are referred by a CAMHS professional from one of these areas and given access to various support.

Northgate supports young people with emotional wellbeing needs. The centre provides a secure core structure to support young people by providing different therapeutic approaches of care, education and recreation activities. Staff positively encourages young people either through individual meetings or group meeting to discuss and evaluate their care and recreational time whilst at the centre.

This report will highlight these changes and identify opportunities that exist for young people to engage in dialogue with staff.

Opportunities for Dialogue and Change

Northgate Clinic

The Northgate Clinic provides opportunities for young people to participate in decision making, which allows young people the opportunity to express their own views on things such as daily activities, individual support, food and unit policies. The unit members also have several meetings throughout the week in order for staff and patients to meet together and this provides a continued process of evaluation for the young people.

When I visited the unit young people told me about these meetings and also how at any time, **“We can call a meeting to discuss something which is important at any time and it will happen”**. Young people also explained that many of the meetings were arranged informally, however, **“We always have the chance to talk to staff about what we think and they generally listen to us”**.

Admission and Assessment.

Staff and young people spend time together developing relationships during this stage. This gives young people the chance to discuss what their needs are, with staff. Support and treatment are then developed together through the admission and assessment process.

Lucy told me, **“The staff have been really helpful and have really listened to how I am feeling when I first came here.”**

Young people can then re-evaluate their support throughout their stay and are given regular opportunities to evaluate or challenge the support they are receiving.

Staff/Patient Book.

There is a comments book that is used by young people and staff to express their views and opinions about the unit. If young people choose to, they keep their identity a secret when they write things in the book. Feedback is done during patient meetings. The book also acts as a decision making tool. Staff write different questions in the book during any particular week to generate discussion between young people and staff.

Lucy showed me the book and explained how the book works. The example Lucy showed me, which was written in the book by a member of staff, read:

- What can we do to get patients out of bed on a morning?

Lucy told me, **“The staff wanted to know what our ideas were to get patients out of bed, or if it was ok for them to stay in bed all day”**. Lucy told me, **“It’s no good if they stay in bed all day because it will not help them get better”**.

The book is used in this way because young people do different things on different days, such as attending school, home leave, therapy or just having a difficult day. It is great that the unit use the book, as this seems to promote young people’s right to participate in decision making.

Patient Meetings.

During these meetings young people chat about their time on the unit and plan what they want to do and what food they want to eat. Natalie explained, **“We all regularly meet up to chat about different things that are going on, or something we do not like that is happening”**. Young people discuss with appropriate staff which staff members should attend the meetings. One young person explained to me, **“This is done because sometimes we want to complain about staff”**. Feedback is then given at the next meeting about all issues that are raised. Chloe added, **“I asked if we could have some curtains up in the lounge”**. Chloe went on to tell me, **“The curtains are up in the lounge now”**.

Activities.

I met up with some young people at breakfast time. Every Friday morning, the young people plan what they will eat for breakfast. Young people are given a budget and, where possible, take turns to go to a local shop to buy the food for breakfast. Young people also plan with staff what they want to do during school holidays, and other different activities on the unit.

Investing In Children Agenda Day

To further develop the involvement of young people in making decisions at Northgate and to develop the service further, Northgate supported an Agenda day. This took place on the 25th February and a report has been written. Several issues were identified as possible important service improvements by young people. Young people and staff are going to

work in partnership on these issues and it will be interesting to see what further developments can be made. If some of these recommendations that have been highlighted through the agenda day processes, lead to change, I am sure Northgate will gain Investing in Children Membership.

Conclusion

Young people's rights are respected at Northgate Clinic and they are free to express their opinions during their stay, which sometimes allows changes to take place. A process of dialogue and change does take place at the centre between young people and staff, and this encourages young people to become involved in decision-making. This is highlighted through the community meeting and other individual meetings that take place at the centre. It is also encouraging that the Unit is committed to making more changes through the agenda day process. This has allowed some young people the opportunity to express their opinions and ideas about the service they receive, that perhaps, they did not have before.

I would, therefore, like to recommend that the Northgate Clinic receives Investing in Children Membership and look forward to future developments and changes through the positive dialogue that exists between the young people and staff.

The following young people have read and agreed with the report and recommend that the Northgate Clinic receive Investing in Children membership. They are: Natasha, Chloe, Lacey, Sadie and Lucy.

I would like to thank the young people and the staff for their time and finish by saying well done.

Rob Johnson
Investing in Children
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